

Creative Living



Monday, July 17, 1989 O&E

(O1E)



organizing Dorothy Lehmkuhl

Q: I've been reading about your *Less Is Better* campaign to decrease junk mail but have never learned where I can write to get off mailing lists. I've asked the Post Office but they were no help.

A: You are right. The Post Office has no control over mail — it is required by law to deliver whatever is legally stamped. I haven't published addresses because many people told me they had tried to get off mailing lists and it didn't work, or that it worked for only a while.

The DMA (Direct Marketing Association) does, however, do it's best to help unhappy consumers and here, for what it's worth, are addresses you can write to request removal of your name from national lists: Mail Preference Service, Director, Marketing Association, 5 East 43rd Street, P.O. Box 3881, Grand Central Station, New York 10163.

Your name will be registered on a "delete file" which is made available to business subscribers on a quarterly basis. You may notice some decrease in your bulk mail within three months and your name will be maintained on that file for five years. This will not affect local mailings nor professional, alumni, political or various others. Your name will appear on national lists when you subscribe to new magazines, apply for credit cards or otherwise inadvertently re-enter your name into the system.

If you want to remain on certain lists such as your favorite mail order company, inform them to retain your name on their "in-house" lists.

Many readers have complained vehemently about telephone solicitations. The DMA can also help remove your name from national phone lists, a service similar to the Mail Preference Service. You may register by writing to: Telephone Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, 5 East 43rd Street, New York 10017.

A third DMA service is called the Mail Order Action Line. MOAL acts as an intermediary between consumers and direct marketing companies to resolve complaints, usually within 30 days. Send the name and address of the company you are complaining about along with photocopies of cancelled checks, order forms or other relevant documents and a letter summarizing the facts, to the Mail Order Action Line at the 10017 Address Above.

It's difficult to evaluate the value of these services because you usually won't know what you don't get. While they won't solve all your problems, they may be worth the small time and effort to try them.

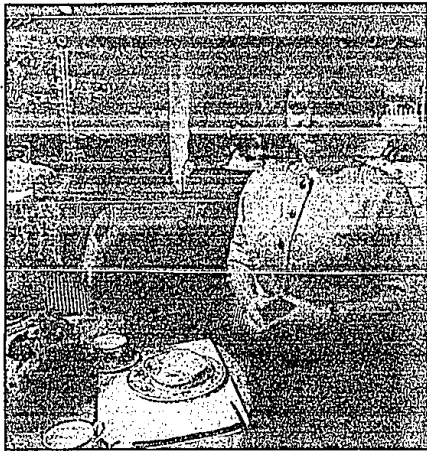


condo queries Robert M. Melsner

Q: My husband and I moved into a brand new condominium in May of 1987. When winter came we found spotty frost on the inside of many of the outside walls, especially in the master bedroom. I sent a letter to the developer notifying it of the problem. I claim that there is not enough insulation but the builder insists that there is enough insulation, only that air is getting in somewhere and so he has recoated every possible area of the outside walls. I have had two winters of frost with embarrassing water marks and runny paint on the walls. The building inspector has been somewhat helpful in getting the builder's attention, but they have not come up with a solution. While the builder has made an attempt to correct the problem, he cannot determine the cause and solution. Now that the weather is breaking, we will not know until next winter if it is repaired. Also, we are wondering what responsibility our co-owner's association has in assisting us to get this resolved.

A: Don't rely on the developer to give you the answer since he may be incapable or unwilling to do so. Hire an independent consultant with the expertise necessary to determine the problem and get a written report. Present it to the developer with a demand that the developer take care of the problem. The association, particularly if it is independent of the developer's control, should also be given a copy of the report as it may be the association's problem to pursue in the event that the defect is in a common element for which the association has the responsibility to repair. If the developer does not answer your request, retain legal counsel and ask legal counsel what remedies you have against the developer and/or the association if the association has a responsibility to pursue the matter in your behalf and does not do so.

Robert M. Melsner is a Birmingham attorney specializing in condominiums, real estate and corporate law. You are invited to submit topics which you would like to see discussed in this column, including questions about condominiums, by writing Robert M. Melsner, 30300 Stearns Road, Suite 407, Birmingham 48010. This column provides general information and should not be construed as legal opinion.



Judy Gettel
in the midst of Expressions

Expressions Getting down to decorating details

By Joan Boram
special writer

JUDY GETTEL tells stories. Not "once-upon-a-time" stories at variance with facts.

No, Judy Gettel tells stories about color, and, like all good storytellers, she embellishes her tales with interesting details. In Gettel's stories, it's accessories that provide embellishment.

Gettel is president of Expressions Custom Furniture, the 41st and only Michigan store of the New Orleans-based franchise chain.

"Originally, Expressions was an outlet for fabrics," Gettel explained.

The founder, Eric Aschaffenburg, new CEO of Expressions Custom Furniture Inc., wanted to give every woman the opportunity to buy fabrics formerly available only through decorators. Our store offers over 500 designer fabrics plus top-grained dyed leathers. There are over 150 different sofa, sleeper, sectional and chair styles. The customer picks the fabric and the style; the piece is custom made and delivered in 45 days."

THE FABRICS are displayed on specially designed racks that line the walls of the expansive, brightly lit Birmingham store. A person who has difficulties making decisions could spend the rest of her life sitting on the floor.

Vignettes of different lifestyles ("stories") offer a customer the opportunity to select the scene against which she wants to play her own life story.

Will it be super-modern black and white, snatched from the brink of austerity by an oil painting of a Holstein cow, and a pack of black-spotted white dogs? "We couldn't keep those dogs in the place," said Gettel. "They were only supposed to be for display, but people just loved them, and we just kept ordering more and selling them."

Now about Southwestern, very popular and influencing other styles? There's an armchair, custom-made to please the customer, actually made in the southwestern United States. Antique Kilims set off the desert colors of the armchair and the heavy rawhide chair. There is a section of sand-colored pottery, heavy "silver" picture frames, folk puppets, and one-dimensional metal craft with spines made of nails. A sparkling white sofa invited you to kick off your spurs and relax. Pastel wooden coyotes, perpetually howling, contribute to the ambience.

"MOST OF OUR accessories and a lot of our furniture pieces, such as the armchair, are made by small companies in the United States. Some of them only make the one piece, such as the coyotes."

"The people in New Orleans are merchandising specialists and we get as much help as we need. All we have to do is ask. Once a year there is a market in New Orleans, exclusive to Expressions franchisees. All the vendors exhibit, and we select what we want to sell. The mer-

The first thing everybody says to me is, 'I want my friends to feel comfortable from the moment they step in the door.' Clients want a house that reflects their taste and lifestyle.

— Joan Knight
Expressions decorator

chandise is unusual, and not available to other stores."

All accessories sold in Expressions stores must be purchased from approved vendors. However, Gettel isn't limited to vendors selected for her in New Orleans.

"If I find someone locally that produces a piece that I think will sell here, I can obtain approval for that vendor by submitted photos of their work and demonstrating that it will be a quality product."

There is the neo-classical story, for purists ("Not for everyone," the English country story. ("The most popular, followed by Southwestern.") with lots of flowered chintz.

There is the Ralph Lauren "gentry" story for people who don't smile much: wood and leather accessories, very tailored. Any minute now the hunt will be over and the horse set will be looting on the traditional sofa with a wide stripe of subdued colors, or the wing chair with a narrower "licking" stripe.

"ACCESSORIES MAKE the story," Gettel said. "They make the settings very, very rich and they give the customer some options. Some stories, Contemporary, for example, may require only two or three striking pieces. Other stories, such as Stately Homes or English Country, may require as many as 40 different accessories."

What trends does Gettel see for the future? She calls on decorator Joan Knight to answer.

"There's a softening, especially in the contemporary look, using texture and color," said Knight. "Warmer tones are emerging in all categories: roses, persimmon, cinnamon, honey beige. At the same time, there's a trend toward darker, more formal colors."

"The key word is eclectic. People are staying home more and entertaining at home. The first thing everybody says to me is, 'I want my friends to feel comfortable from the moment they step in the door.' Clients want a house that reflects their taste and lifestyle."

"The first thing I ask a client is 'What do you want to keep?' and we build around that. It isn't always a valuable piece; sometimes it has sentimental value. The important thing is, it's a personal look, not a 'decorated' look."

And, of course, they all lived happily ever after — another expression people know and understand.

Design seminar planned

Michigan Design Center in Troy and Schoolcraft College in Livonia will team to present a seminar, "Design Directions — '89" on Friday, Oct. 13. The event will be open to the public.

Top area designers will be discussion leaders in morning sessions followed by lunch and a tour of the design center, open to the trade only, as a rule.

For the tours, plans call for a professional designer to oversee small groups of about 12, according to Helen Balmer, who is coordinating the event for Schoolcraft.

Designers and their topics will include: Sheldon J. Scott, "How to Work with a Designer" scheduled for 9-10 a.m.; Sandra Seligman and Kevin McNammon, "Terrific Trends in Home Furnishings and Decorating," 10-11 a.m.; Brian Killian, "The Magic of Color, Light Texture and Fabric," 11 to noon. Luncheon will follow.

Cost of the seminar will be \$55 per person, including lunch. Registrations will be accepted beginning in mid-August, Balmer said. For more information, call Balmer at 540-2465.

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